

**DEER HERD UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**Deer Herd Unit # 6**  
**(Chalk Creek)**  
**April 2006**

**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

**Summit and Duchesne counties** - Boundary begins at the junction of I-84 and I-80 near Echo; northeasterly on I-80 to the Utah-Wyoming state line; southeast along this state line to SR-150; south on SR-150 to Pass Lake and the Weber River Trail head; west on this trail to Holiday Park and the Weber River road; west on this road to SR-32; northwest on SR-32 to I-80 and Wanship; north on I-80 to I-84 near Echo.

**LAND OWNERSHIP**

**RANGE AREA AND APPROXIMATE OWNERSHIP**

Ownership	Yearlong range		Summer Range		Winter Range	
	Area (acres)	%	Area (acres)	%	Area (acres)	%
Forest Service	0	??	33,719	11%	91	.1%
Bureau of Land Management	0	??	507	.2%	324	.4%
Utah State Institutional Trust Lands	0	??	363	.1%	259	.3%
Native American Trust Lands	0	??	0	0%	0	0%
Private	0	??	271,558	88.7%	71,612	96%
Department of Defense	0	??	0	0%	0	0%
USFWS Refuge	0	??	0	0%	0	0%
National Parks	0	??	0	0%	0	0%
Utah State Parks	0	??	0	0%	131	.2%
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources	0	??	0	0%	2,044	3%
<b>2006 TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>306,147</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>74,461</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **UNIT MANAGEMENT GOALS**

- Manage for a population of healthy animals capable of providing a broad range of recreational opportunities, including hunting and viewing.
- Balance deer herd impacts with human needs, such as private property rights, agricultural crops and local economies.
- Maintain the population at a level that is within the short-term capability or “carrying capacity” of the available habitat, based on winter range trend studies conducted every five years. Using the long-term population objective as a guide, the short-term objective will be adjusted according to the percent change of the most recent range trend assessments of the Desired Components Index (DCI). [The DCI is a measurement of the condition of the big game winter range and relates to the potential “carrying capacity” of big game on that range. As the DCI changes, the short-term population objective may increase or decrease].

## **POPULATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- < **Target Winter Herd Size** – A population of 10,500 wintering deer. This population objective applies to both the short-term (5-year life of this plan) and long term, barring significant changes in range conditions on the unit.
- < **Herd Composition** - A three-year average postseason buck to doe ratio of at least 15 bucks per 100 does.

### **Unit 6**

1994-2005 Objective: 11,500  
2006-2011 Objective: 10,500  
Change - 1,000

The population objective was reduced in 2006 to account for loss of deer winter habitat due to residential and urban development.

## **POPULATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

### **Monitoring**

- < **Population Size** – A computer model will be used to estimate the wintering population size, by utilizing harvest data, postseason and spring classifications and mortality estimates.
- < **Buck Age Structure** - Monitor age class structure of the buck population through the use of checking stations, postseason classification, uniform harvest surveys and field bag checks.
- < **Harvest** - The primary means of monitoring harvest will be through the statewide uniform harvest survey. Achieve the target population size, through antlerless and either sex hunting, using a variety of harvest methods and seasons. The winter population should result in an expected annual buck harvest of approximately 1,400 when normal conditions occur, but recognize that buck harvest will be above or below what is expected due to climatic and productivity variables. Buck harvest strategies will be developed through the RAC and Wildlife Board process to achieve management objectives for buck to doe ratios.

**Limiting Factors (May prevent achieving management objectives)**

- < Crop Depredation - Take all steps necessary to minimize depredation as prescribed by State Law and DWR Policy.
- < Habitat -Winter and summer forage conditions, public land range availability and landowner acceptance will determine herd size. Excessive habitat utilization will be addressed.
  - Loss of habitat due to human expansion and development.
- < Predation - Use the DWR predator management policy
  - The population trend and percent of herd size objective, will determine the need for predator control by species, geographic area and season of year.
  - DWR will seek assistance from Wildlife Services when deer populations are depressed and where there is a reasonable chance of gaining some relief through a predator control effort. Wildlife Services efforts will be concentrated during and immediately prior to the fawning period.
  - Cougar harvest will be recommended to benefit deer while maintaining the cougar as a valued resource in its own right.
- < Highway Mortality - Cooperate with the Utah Dept. Of Transportation in constructing of highway fences, passage structures and warning signs etc.
- < Illegal Harvest - Should illegal kills be identified as a significant source of mortality, specific preventive measures will be developed within the context of an Action Plan. This plan will be developed in cooperation with the Law Enforcement Section.

**HABITAT MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- < Maintain and/or enhance forage production through direct habitat improvements throughout the unit on winter range to achieve population management objectives.
- < Work with private landowners and federal, state and local government agencies to maintain and protect critical and existing winter range from future losses.
- < Maintain or improve habitat security and escapement opportunities for deer.

**Condition of deer winter range on unit 6, as indicated by DWR range trend surveys**

Year	Mean DCI Score for Unit	Classification	Unit-specific DCI Score Range: Very Poor	Unit-specific DCI Score Range: Poor	Unit-specific DCI Score Range: Fair	Unit-specific DCI Score Range: Good	Unit-specific DCI Score Range: Excellent
1996	57	Fair	< 36	36 - 50	51 – 64	65 - 81	> 82
2001	54	Fair					

## **HABITAT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

- < Continue to monitor the permanent range trend studies located throughout the winter range.
- < Work cooperatively to utilize grazing, prescribed burning and other recognized vegetative manipulation techniques to enhance deer forage quantity and quality.
- < Utilize antlerless deer harvest to improve or protect forage conditions if and when vegetative declines are attributed to deer over utilization.
- < Cooperate with and provide input to land management planning efforts dealing with management decisions affecting habitat security, quality and quantity.

## **PERMANENT RANGE TREND SUMMARIES**

### **Unit 6, Chalk Creek**

The overall range trend (from 2001) within this unit is stable to slightly down, with a DCI of 51 to 64 in 2001 indicating a fair condition. Some areas within this unit suffered from an extended drought. This is reflected in the DCI rating for these sites.

There are 11 range trend sites on this unit. The most recent reading to these sites was done in 2001. All but 2 of the sites are on private land. Permission to trespass was denied on 2 of these sites in 2001. All of the transects are located on important big game winter range. All sites have a stable to improving soil trend except the Spring Hollow (#6-3) site, which is down slightly. Browse is in a stable to slightly downward trend on all sites. Downward trends continue on the juniper sites due to the lack of desirable browse plants. Overall, this unit's winter range shows a stable to downward trend for browse, grasses and forbs. Fires in recent years have destroyed winter range in the Grass Creek-Echo and Huff Creek areas. Prime big game winter range in this unit is being lost to development every year. Management options are rather limited in this unit because it is predominantly private land. A problem in this unit is the composition of herbaceous understory, which on most sites is mostly made up of annual species, cheat grass that prohibits sagebrush seedling establishment during hot dry summers.

### **Duration of Plan**

This unit management plan was approved by the Wildlife Board on \_\_\_\_\_ and will be in effect for five years from that date, or until amended.